NO. 31 OCT.
30688

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DC TV COMIC

THE SATURDAY MORNING SUPER-STAR!

WITH ONE MAGIC WORD...

SHAZAM!

45

THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL

5 TONS

WATCH OUT FOR THAT WEIGHT!

WHAT WEIGHT?

YOU COULD BE IN THE SUPERMAN MOVIE --DETAILS INSIDE--

10
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CHOSEN TO RECEIVE THE POWERS OF SIX ANCIENT ELDERS, YOUNG NEWSCASTER BILLY BATSON HAS ONLY TO SPEAK THE NAME OF THE ANCIENT WIZARD
SHAZAM!
AND IN A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, HE IS TRANSFORMED INTO THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL...
SOLOMON-WISDOM
HERCULES-STRENGTH
ATLAS-STAMINA
ZEUS-POWER
ACHILLES-COURAGE
MERCURY-SPEED
CAPTAIN MARVEL
STORY: E. NELSON BRIDWELL
ART: KURT SCHAFFENBERGER & BOB WIACEK
COLOR: JERRY SERPE
YOU WOULDN'T ARREST US, WOULD YOU, CAPTAIN MARVEL?
NO--HE'S TOO MUCH A GENTLEMAN TO FIGHT WOMEN!
ULP! I--UH--HOLEY MOLEY--
HOLD ON, CAP! I'LL SAVE YOU!
NO MAN HAS BEEN ABLE TO BEAT CAPTAIN MARVEL, THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL. BUT WOMEN ARE ANOTHER MATTER--THAT'S WHERE CAP'S WEAKNESS LIES--AND HE NEEDS HELP FROM ANOTHER HERO--ONE FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMICS--WHEN HE'S CONFRONTED BY SIX SUPER-FEMALES CALLED...
The RAINBOW SQUAD

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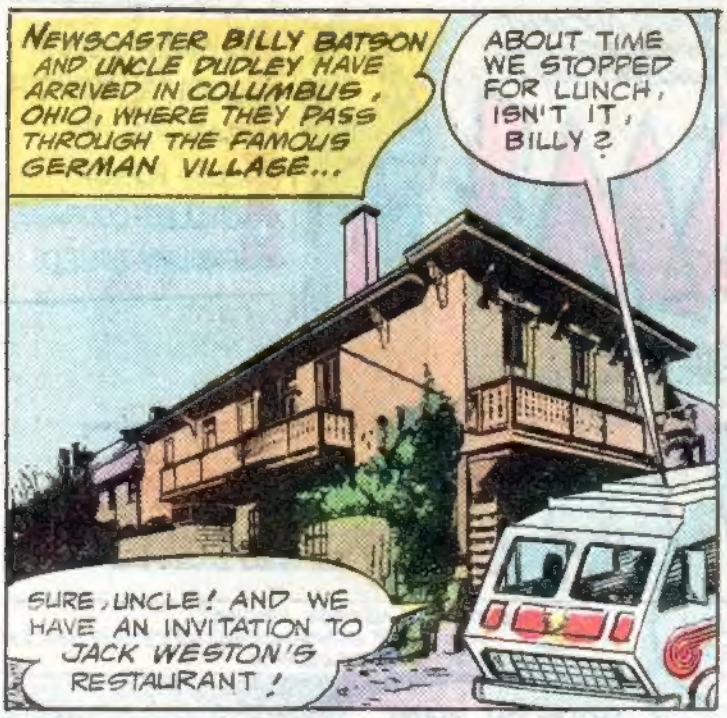

NEWSCASTER BILLY BATSON AND UNCLE DUDLEY HAVE ARRIVED IN COLUMBUS, OHIO, WHERE THEY PASS THROUGH THE FAMOUS GERMAN VILLAGE...
ABOUT TIME WE STOPPED FOR LUNCH, ISN'T IT, BILLY?
SURE, UNCLE! AND WE HAVE AN INVITATION TO JACK WESTON'S RESTAURANT!

AND WHO IS JACK WESTON? YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT...
Weston's
BILLY--AND DUDLEY! GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, JACK! I NEVER EXPECTED YOU'D WIND UP AS A RESTAURANTEUR!

WELL, WHY NOT? WHEN I WAS PRIVATE JACK WESTON, U.S. ARMY, I SPENT ENOUGH TIME ON K.P.!
ONLY BECAUSE THE SERGEANT DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE REALLY MINUTE MAN, THE ONE-MAN ARMY! *

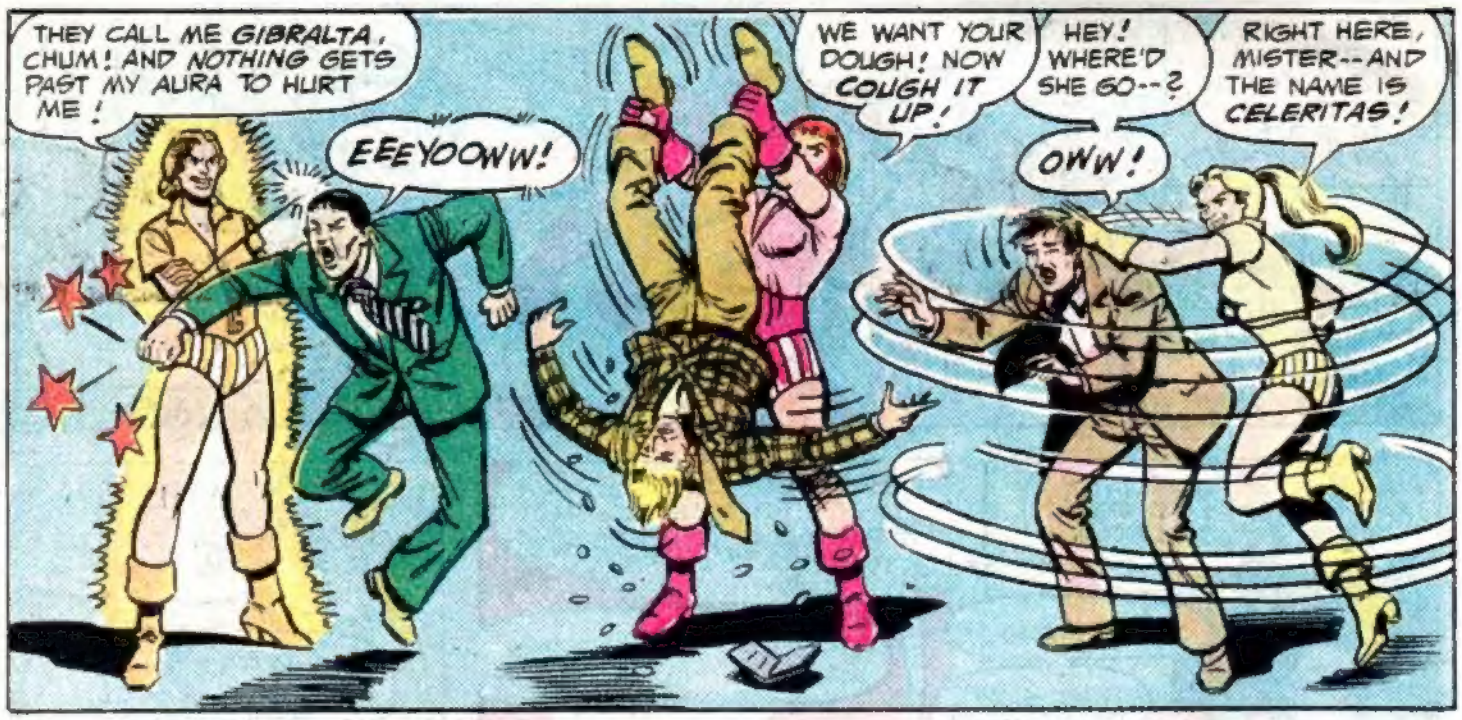
*MINUTE MAN APPEARED IN MASTER COMICS, AMERICA'S GREATEST COMICS AND IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE FROM 1941 TO 1944!-- THE BIG E.

YES--AND GENERAL MILTON DIDN'T ALWAYS HAVE A CHANCE TO GET ME A LEAVE WHEN MINUTE MAN WAS NEEDED! NO ONE ELSE IN THE MILITARY KNEW ABOUT MY DOUBLE LIFE!
I'VE ALREADY ORDERED FOR YOU--THE FOOD WILL BE HERE IN A FEW MOMENTS!

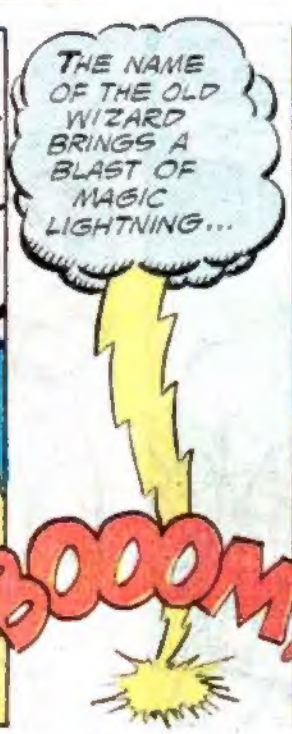
AND SO, SHORTLY...
GODFREY! I SEE AN OLD FRIEND ENTERING--RON SCHEER--VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SCOTT KRAUSS NEWS AGENCY!
RON--COME OVER AND JOIN US!
YES--THE FOOD IS GREAT!

I HADN'T EVEN HEARD YOU WERE IN TOWN! IS CAPTAIN MARVEL HERE, TOO?
WHY--UH--HE'S NEVER FAR AWAY!
QUITE SO! THOUGH WE'VE HAD NO--UH--CONTACT WITH HIM SINCE HE ARRESTED SIVANA IN PITTSBURGH!

BUT CAPTAIN MARVEL WILL HAVE OCCASION TO SHOW UP-- AS IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW!
COME ON, RAINBOW SQUAD! SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU CAN DO!
AH, LADIES-- A TABLE FOR SIX?
I DON'T LIKE BEIN' CALLED A LADY!
QUIET, VIRAGO!
TELL HIM, DAUNTLESS!
WE'RE HERE TO ROB THE PLACE--TO TAKE ALL THE MONEY AND VALUABLES! ANY OBJECTIONS?
N-NO! DO ANYTHING YOU LIKE! I W-WON'T GET IN YOUR WAY!
THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! I KNOW THAT WAITER! HE'S NO COWARD--HE ONCE CAPTURED AN ARMED MUGGER SINGLE-HANDED!
IT'S AS THOUGH THAT YOUNG WOMAN STOLE HIS COURAGE!
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD-- AH--CALL CAPTAIN MARVEL, BILLY!
LET'S SEE WHAT THEY DO FIRST!
I'D RATHER WAIT TILL I'M SURE NO ONE'S LOOKING AT ME!
IT WOULD BE WISE FOR YOU ALL TO HAND OVER YOUR CASH WITHOUT FURTHER ADO!
ARE YOU KIDDING? THERE ARE ENOUGH OF US TO TAKE CARE OF YOU!
YEAH! THOSE DAMES MUST BE LOONY! THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE GUNS!
I DON'T LIKE TO HIT FEMALES, BUT IF YOU INSIST...
LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A CITIZENS' ARREST!
COME ON, SISTER-- A FANCY COSTUME DOESN'T MAKE YOU A SUPER-VILLAIN!


THEY CALL ME GIBRALTA, CHUM! AND NOTHING GETS PAST MY AURA TO HURT ME!
EEEYOOWW!
WE WANT YOUR DOUGH! NOW COUGH IT UP!
HEY! WHERE'D SHE GO--?
OWW!
RIGHT HERE, MISTER--AND THE NAME IS CELERITAS!

COME ON--LET'S GIVE THOSE GUYS SOME HELP!
INDEED! IT FAIRLY MAKES MY BLOOD BOIL!
SO FAR, THEY'VE USED COURAGE, WISDOM, STAMINA, STRENGTH AND SPEED--ALL POWERS OF CAPTAIN MARVEL! IF THE LAST ONE HAS POWER--

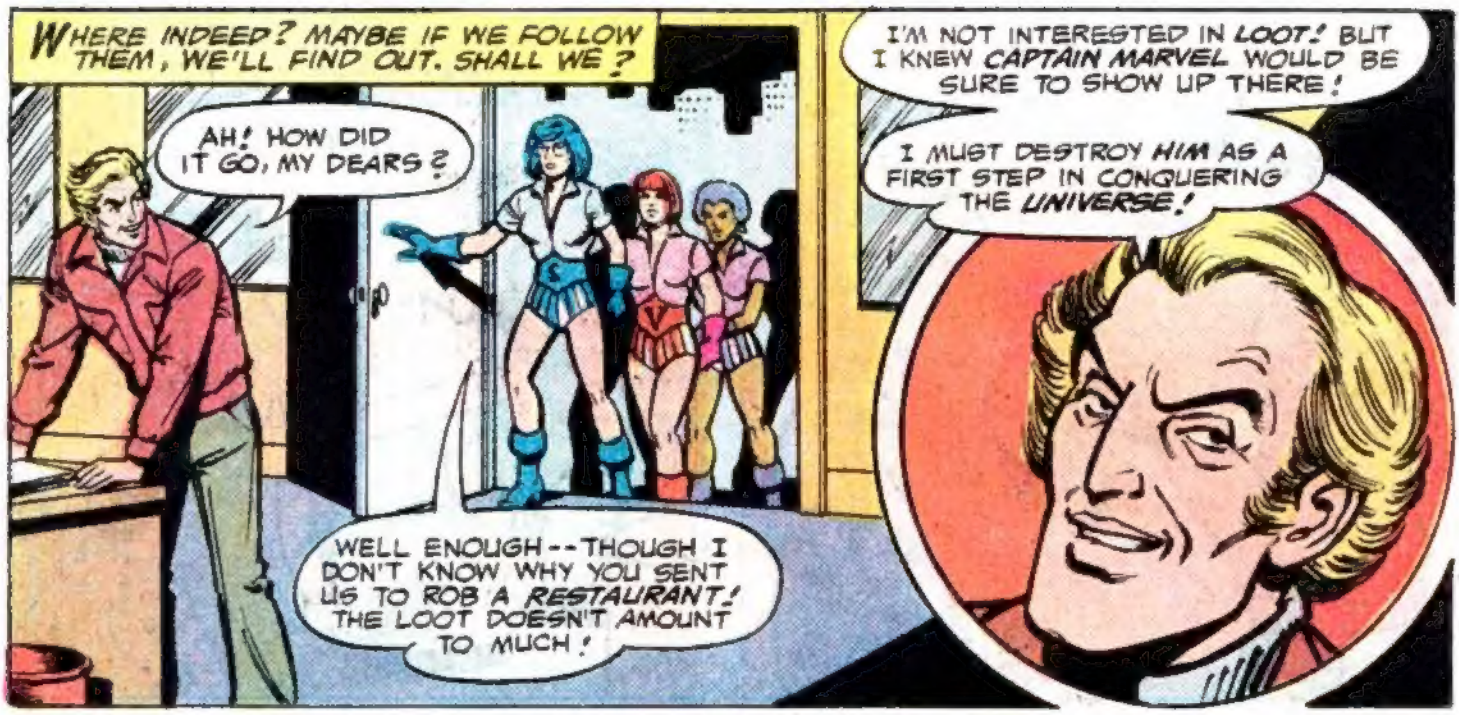


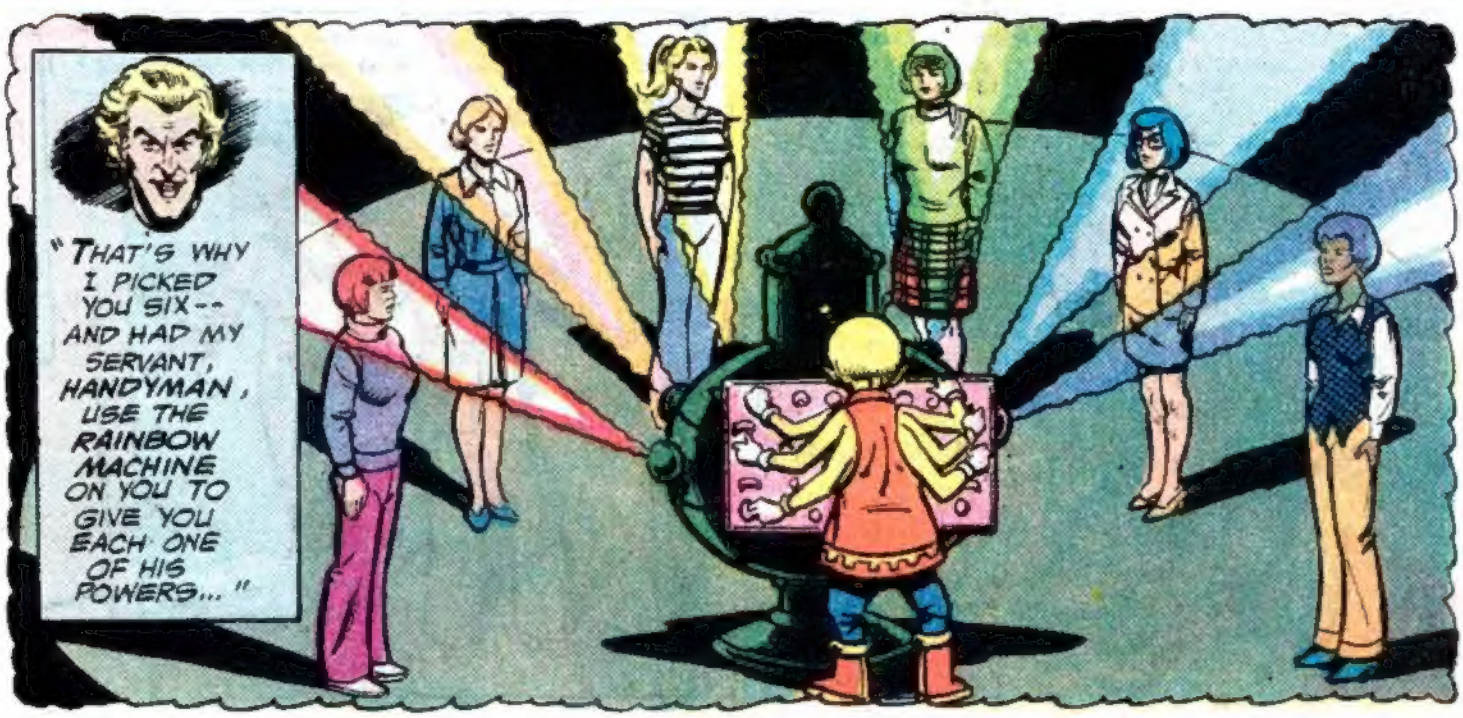
...INSTANTLY TRANSFORMING BILLY INTO CAPTAIN MARVEL!
EACH OF THEM SEEMS TO HAVE ONE POWER SIMILAR TO ONE OF MINE!
ALL RIGHT--LET'S SEE HOW THEY STACK UP AGAINST ME!

CONTINUED ON 35TH PAGE FOLLOWING

IT'S CAPTAIN MARVEL! YOU KNOW WHAT MR. W SAID TO DO!
YES--BUT DON'T EXPECT ME TO JOIN IN! THOSE MACHO TYPES DISGUST ME!
OHH--CAPTAIN MARVEL--MY HERO! MMMMMMM!
HOLY MO-- MMMM!
WHAT A MAGNIFICENT HUNK OF MAN!
OH, WOW! HAS HE GOT MUSCLES!
I JUST LOVE BEING CAUGHT BY HIM!
H-HOLY MOLEY! ULP!
DISGUSTING!
CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT--HAVE TO GET OUT--
GREAT AUNT LIZZIE! WHAT'S GOT INTO HIM?
HAHAHAHAHA! IT WORKED!
BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH! I'M GOING TO DESTROY HIM WITH MY POWER!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY BEAUTIFUL WOMEN MAKING A FUSS OVER ME DOES THAT TO ME-- BUT I CAN NEVER GET MY HEAD STRAIGHT WHEN IT HAPPENS!
NOW!

THERE! THAT BLAST OF ATOMIC RADIATION SHOULD SIZZLE HIM TO A CRISP!
WHAT CAN I DO? I CAN'T BEAT UP ON THOSE GIRLS!
GREAT SNAKES! THEY'LL HAVE TO CLOSE THE STREET FOR WEEKS TO DECONTAMINATE IT--BUT HE NEVER EVEN FELT THAT!
AND BACK IN THE RESTAURANT...
NO, YOU DON'T! I'M NOT LETTING YOU GET AWAY!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL NEED SOME CONVINCING!
WHAMM!
OOoHHH! SHE ONLY HIT ME WITH THE EDGE OF THAT AURA--BUT WHAT A WALLOP!
GAD! WHERE COULD THEY HAVE ACQUIRED SUCH POWERS?

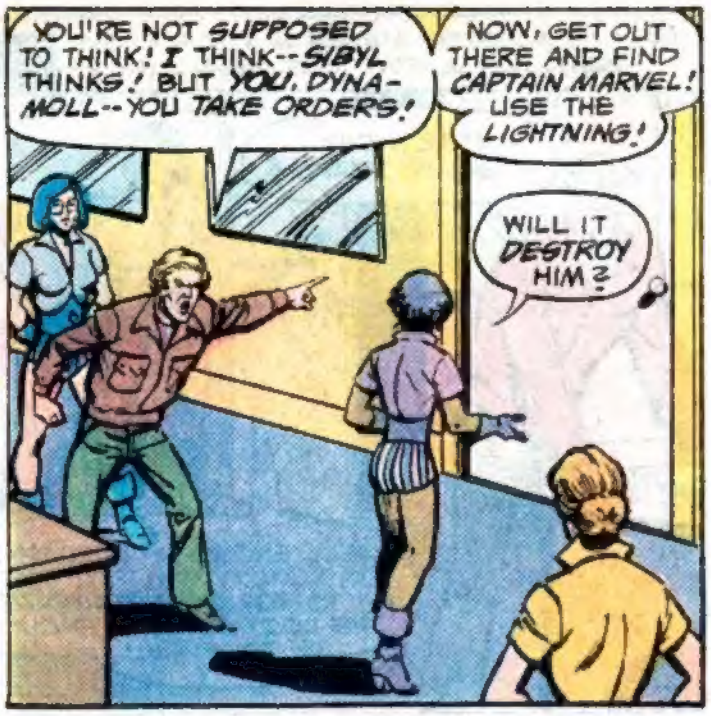

WHERE INDEED? MAYBE IF WE FOLLOW THEM, WE'LL FIND OUT. SHALL WE?
AH! HOW DID IT GO, MY DEARS?
WELL ENOUGH--THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU SENT US TO ROB A RESTAURANT! THE LOOT DOESN'T AMOUNT TO MUCH!
I'M NOT INTERESTED IN LOOT! BUT I KNEW CAPTAIN MARVEL WOULD BE SURE TO SHOW UP THERE!
I MUST DESTROY HIM AS A FIRST STEP IN CONQUERING THE UNIVERSE!

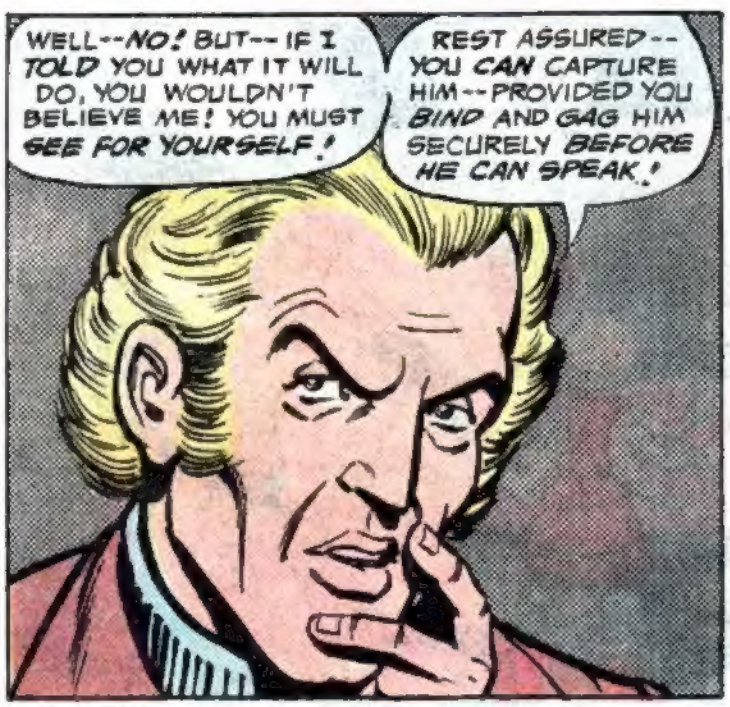

"THAT'S WHY I PICKED YOU SIX--AND HAD MY SERVANT, HANDYMAN, USE THE RAINBOW MACHINE ON YOU TO GIVE YOU EACH ONE OF HIS POWERS..."

I CHOSE WOMEN BECAUSE I KNEW THEY CONSTITUTE A WEAKNESS ON CAPTAIN MARVEL'S PART!
AND YOUR SCHEME WORKED!

BUT WE COULDN'T HURT HIM--EVEN THOUGH I USED ATOMIC POWER ON HIM!
WHAT?

DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO HIT HIM WITH LIGHTNING?
WELL--SURE--BUT SINCE MY AURA CAN PRODUCE ANY KIND OF ENERGY, I FIGURED AN ATOMIC BLAST WOULD BE BETTER!

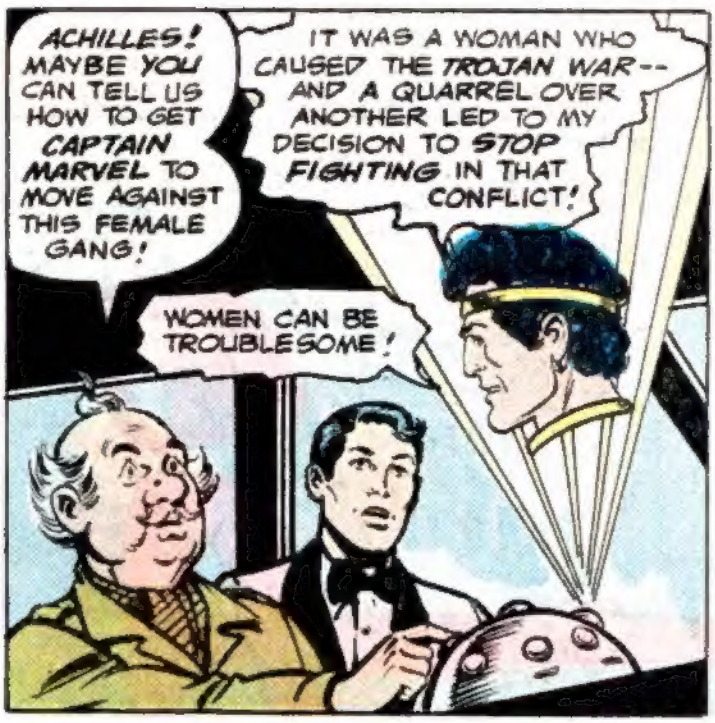

YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO THINK! I THINK--SIBYL THINKS! BUT YOU, DYNAMOLL--YOU TAKE ORDERS!
NOW, GET OUT THERE AND FIND CAPTAIN MARVEL! USE THE LIGHTNING!
WILL IT DESTROY HIM?


WELL--NO! BUT--IF I TOLD YOU WHAT IT WILL DO, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME! YOU MUST SEE FOR YOURSELF!
REST ASSURED--YOU CAN CAPTURE HIM--PROVIDED YOU BIND AND GAG HIM SECURELY BEFORE HE CAN SPEAK!

ISN'T MR. WONDERFUL JUST--WONDERFUL?
MERELY ANOTHER MALE SWINE WHO LOVES HIMSELF--LOOK AT ALL THOSE MIRRORS!
NO--HE HAS A GREAT CRIMINAL MIND!
HA, HO, HEE, HAW!
BUT HIS VOICE SOUNDS KINDA--STRANGE!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

MEANTIME, CAPTAIN MARVEL'S FRIENDS ARE WORRIED ABOUT HIM...
WHY DO PRETTY GIRLS SPOOK CAP LIKE THAT?
REMEMBER--INSIDE HE IS STILL BILLY--A BOY!
BUT I THINK IT'S TIME WE CONSULTED ONE OF THE ELDERS VIA ETERNIPHONE!

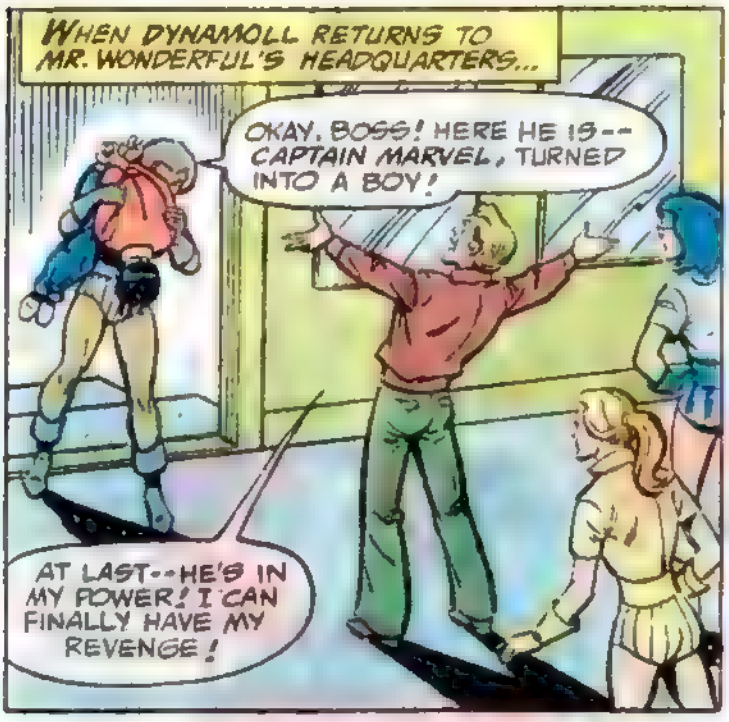

ACHILLES! MAYBE YOU CAN TELL US HOW TO GET CAPTAIN MARVEL TO MOVE AGAINST THIS FEMALE GANG!
IT WAS A WOMAN WHO CAUSED THE TROJAN WAR--AND A QUARREL OVER ANOTHER LED TO MY DECISION TO STOP FIGHTING IN THAT CONFLICT!
WOMEN CAN BE TROUBLESOME!

THEN MY BEST FRIEND, PATROCLUS, WENT OUT IN MY PLACE--AND THE TROJAN HERO, HECTOR, SLEW HIM!
SO I WENT BACK INTO BATTLE--AND AVENGED MY FRIEND! HEED MY WORDS, JACK WESTON!

WELL, THAT'S IT--A FRIEND HAS TO SHOW CAP THE WAY! AND I'M ELECTED!
SO I'LL HAVE TO GO HOME FOR SOMETHING I HADN'T EXPECTED TO WEAR AGAIN!

AND SHORTLY AFTER...
IF I'M GOING TO HUNT DOWN SUPER-VILLAINS, I'LL DO IT BEST AS MINUTE MAN!

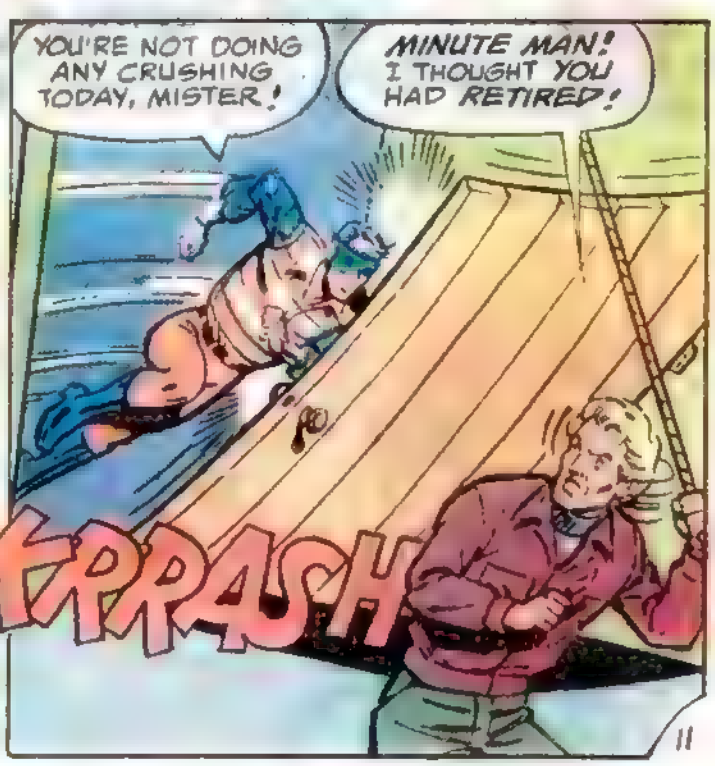
AND WHERE IS CAPTAIN MARVEL? STILL WANDERING ABOUT, HIS THOUGHTS CONFUSED ...PASSING CITY HALL...
HOLY MOLEY! WHAT CAN I DO? I CAN'T CLOBBER GIRLS -- AND YET--
AT LAST--THERE HE IS! MR. WONDERFUL SAID A LIGHTNING BLAST WOULD DO-- WHATEVER IT IS HE WANTS DONE!
HERE GOES!
NOW LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS!
KRAAACLE!
WHAT HAPPENED? HOLY MOLEY! I DIDN'T SAY...
...SHAZ-- URRRGGH!
I WAS TOLD TO KEEP YOU QUIET, KID-- SO--
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW MY LIGHTNING TURNED A SUPER-HERO INTO A KID--BUT SOME-HOW IT DID!
10


WHEN DYNAMOLL RETURNS TO MR. WONDERFUL'S HEADQUARTERS...
OKAY, BOSS! HERE HE IS--CAPTAIN MARVEL, TURNED INTO A BOY!
AT LAST--HE'S IN MY POWER! I CAN FINALLY HAVE MY REVENGE!

HUH? I NEVER KNEW MARVEL HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH MR. WONDERFUL!
CHANCES ARE THE HERO PUT HIM IN JAIL SOME TIME OR OTHER!

5 TONS
I JUST PLACE YOU HERE, BILLY--

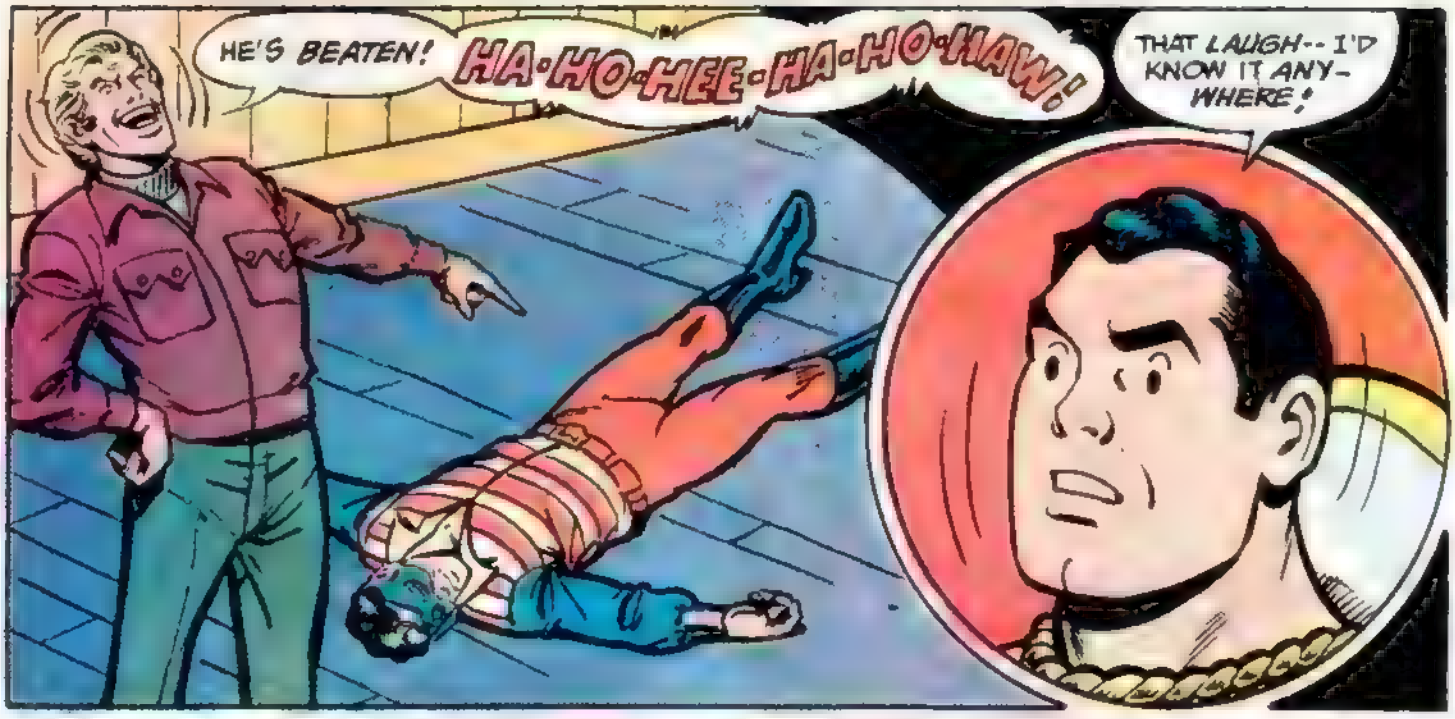
NOW I'M GOING TO CUT THIS ROPE AND DROP THAT HEAVY WEIGHT ON YOU!
I'VE WANTED TO DO THIS FOR A LONG TIME --CRUSH YOU LIKE A WORM!


YOU'RE NOT DOING ANY CRUSHING TODAY, MISTER!
MINUTE MAN! I THOUGHT YOU HAD RETIRED!
KRRASH

BUT YOU'RE STILL TOO LATE!
BARAM!
THANKS, MINUTE MAN! THIS COULD HAVE DONE A LOT OF DAMAGE TO BILLY!
AM I, BILLY?
NO--
--SHAZAM!
COME ON, GIRLS! WE OUTNUMBER THEM THREE TO ONE!
WE CAN TAKE THEM, CAP!
B-BUT I CAN'T-- NOT WOMEN-- I--
DO AS YOU PLEASE! I'M TAKING CARE OF PRETTY BOY OVER THERE!
N-NO-- DON'T!
GIRLS-- PROTECT ME!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

I CAN STOP HIM FAST!
OH, YOU'RE QUICK, ALL RIGHT--
--BUT YOU LACK STRENGTH--
--AND FIGHTING SKILLS!
OWOOO!
YOU DON'T DARE STAND UP TO ME-- NOBODY DOES!
IT'S TRUE--I FEEL TERRIFIED OF HER! MUST--FIGHT IT!
NOW'S OUR CHANCE! GET HIM!
WE'LL HOLD HIM, VIRAGO! GET READY!
CRUNCH!
GLAD TO! I ALWAYS GET A CHARGE OUT OF CLOBBERING MALE SUPER-HEROES!


HE'S BEATEN!
HA-HO-HEE-HA-HO-HAW!
THAT LAUGH-- I'D KNOW IT ANY-WHERE!

STOP HIM!

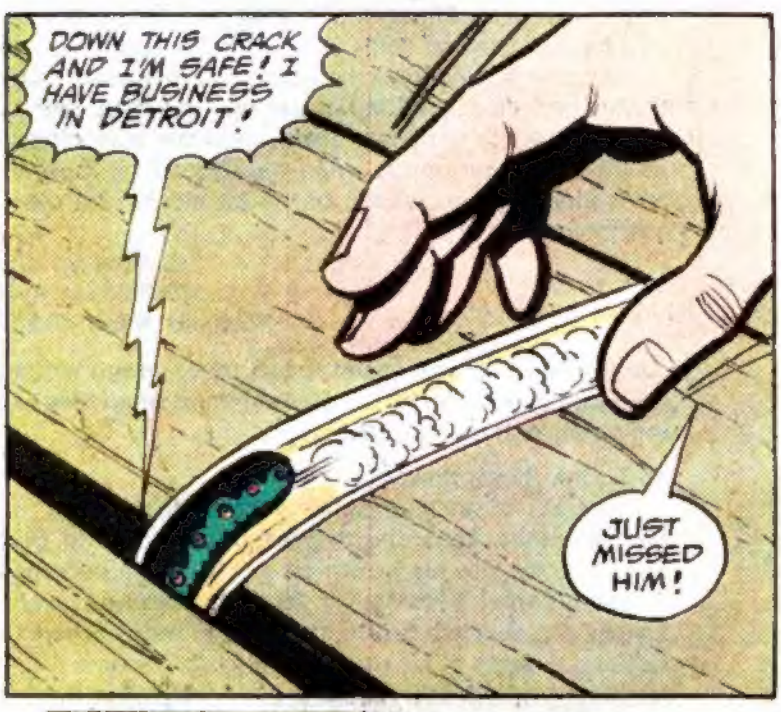
GO ON-- MAKE HIM A COWARD!
BACK OFF... CRINGE, YOU--
THAT STUFF CAN'T WORK ON ME--

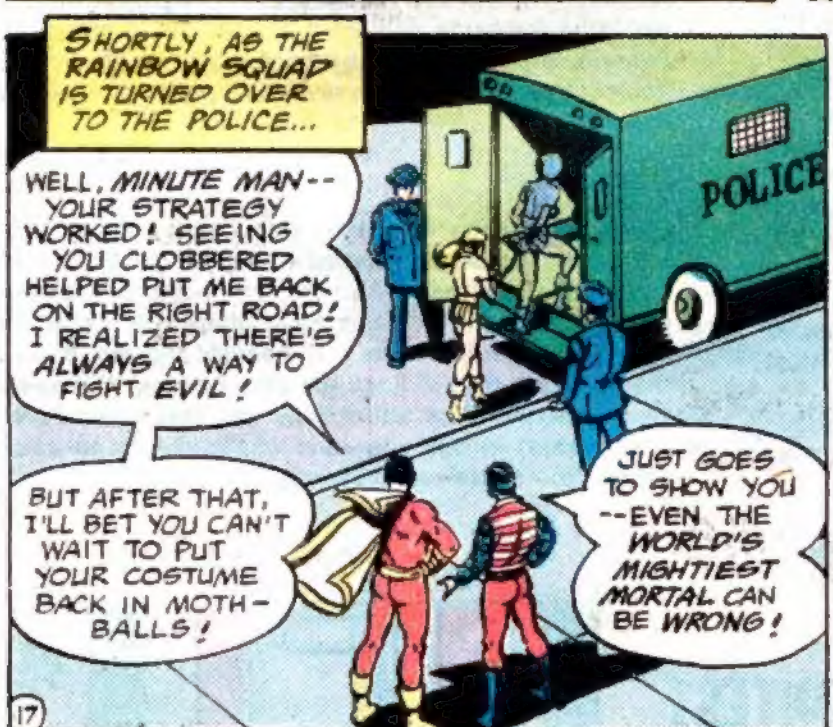
FOR ONCE, STRONG BOY, YOU'RE ABOUT TO MEET SOMEONE AS STRONG AS YOU ARE!

YYEEOOW!
I BROKE MY HAND!
THAT'S BECAUSE I'M INVULNERABLE-- AND YOU AREN'T!

I'LL BUZZ HIM LIKE A HORNET... HIT HIM AT SUPER-SPEED!
UNNHH!
KRAMM!
OOOH!
URRRGGH!
THREE MORE DOWN--BUT I BLITZED HIM BEFORE AND I CAN REPEAT IT!
AH--THIS MIRROR SHOULD REFLECT THE BLAST!
QWWWFFF!
THAT LEAVES ONLY GIBRALTA--AND AS CAP GRABS THE ROPES BILLY WAS BOUND WITH...
I CAN'T HURT YOU, BUT SINCE YOU HAVE NO SUPER-STRENGTH, THIS SHOULD HOLD YOU!
NOW, YOU FIEND--I'VE GOT YOU!
NO--GET AWAY, YOU BIG BRUTE!
CAPTAIN MARVEL'S KILLED HIM -- NO!
MR. WONDERFUL ISN'T HUMAN--HE'S AN ANDROID!
KRAA-AMM

RIGHT--AND HERE'S THE ONE WHO WAS INSIDE, RUNNING HIM!
HOLY CROW! YOU MEAN WE'VE BEEN WORKING FOR A WORM?
NOT JUST A WORM! I'M MR. MIND, THE GREATEST CRIMINAL BRAIN IN THE UNIVERSE! IT'S NOT MY FAULT I WAS BORN OF AN ALIEN WORM-LIKE RACE ON A DISTANT WORLD!
"BUT I WAS A MUTANT--MUCH MORE BRILLIANT THAN ANY OTHER OF MY RACE..."
I CAN'T BE SATISFIED WITH THE DULL LIFE HERE! I SHOULD BE OUT CONQUERING WORLDS--RULING THE UNIVERSE!
BUT SINCE WE LIVE UNDERGROUND, WE ALL HAVE POOR EYESIGHT--AND I CAN'T COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER BEINGS BY TOUCHING FEELERS, AS WE DO!
"THAT'S WHY I ORIGINALLY SPOKE TO MY MINIONS BY RADIO--AFTER I GOT MY GLASSES AND VOICE AMPLIFIER--AND WHY I HAD HANDYMAN BUILD MY MR. WONDERFUL ANDROID..."
IF ONLY I COULD BUILD THINGS I INVENT! BUT I'M ONLY A WORM WITH NO HANDS! I MUST GET OTHERS TO WORK FOR ME!
JUST ONE QUESTION--AND THIS TIME I WANT AN ANSWER! I CAPTURED YOU--YOU WERE TRIED--FOUND GUILTY OF 186,744 MURDERS--AND YOU WERE EXECUTED IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR! HOW DID YOU SURVIVE?
YOU FORGET--I'M AN ALIEN! MY RACE IS IMMUNE TO ELECTRIC SHOCK! IT DOESN'T KILL US--ONLY PUTS US INTO SUSPENDED ANIMATION!
"WHEN I CAME TO, I WAS IN THE HANDS OF A TAXIDERMIST WHO HAD BEEN HIRED TO STUFF ME FOR A MUSEUM..."
HA! I'VE HYPNOTIZED HIM! NOW--
YOU WILL MAKE A FAKE WORM FOR THE MUSEUM--AND YOU WILL RELEASE ME!
YES--SIR!
16
CONCLUDED ON 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING




SHORTLY, AS THE RAINBOW SQUAD IS TURNED OVER TO THE POLICE...
POLICE
WELL, MINUTE MAN--YOUR STRATEGY WORKED! SEEING YOU CLOBBERED HELPED PUT ME BACK ON THE RIGHT ROAD! I REALIZED THERE'S ALWAYS A WAY TO FIGHT EVIL!
BUT AFTER THAT, I'LL BET YOU CAN'T WAIT TO PUT YOUR COSTUME BACK IN MOTH-BALLS!
JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU --EVEN THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL CAN BE WRONG!

I REALIZE NOW WHAT MY LIFE'S BEEN LACKING THESE LAST FEW YEARS--EXCITEMENT! YOU MAY BE SEEING MINUTE MAN IN HARNESS A LOT FROM NOW ON!
WELCOME BACK, PAL!
THE END

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN AUG.

Dear Editor:

Shazam #29 was the funniest comic I ever read! Even though **Captain Marvel** only appeared in 31 of the 96 panels, the story was still great. Looks like E.N.B. didn't even try to play it straight. (**Ibac** going over Niagara Falls in a barrel!) Even the Eterni-Phone talk with **Solomon** was funny, which I didn't expect. ("If I knew better, I wouldn't have had 700 wives!")

When I heard Uncle Dudley was going to remain with Billy, I figured **Uncle Marvel** would show up sooner or later. But only three issues later? He even looked better with the lip-spinach!

The idea of **Ibac** being more afraid of **Aunt Minerva** than of **Cap** was pure genius! **Minerva** beating up the cyclist for his transportation was good, too. Kurt Schaffenberger's art is always nice, and Vince Colletta's inks made it look a lot like C.C. Beck's back in #1.

The cover was great, but can't you do something about the **DC-TV Comic** logo? It's awful!

Good cover. Good Story. Good art. Good comic!

Paul Balze
115 Crest Ave.
Glen Burnie, Md. 21061

(Okay, we've changed the DC-TV symbol. Like it?—E.N.B.)

Dear Mr. Bridwell:

The new **Shazam** format is coming along fine. Although #29 wasn't as good as the past few issues, it was a terrific pleasure! I met **Ibac** before in **JLA** #135, but this is the first time I've seen **Aunt Minerva**, and I found both very interesting villains, both worthy of coming back soon! The way it sounds, Sivana will be back next ish, although I wish he wouldn't. He and we need a break! But I hope you have a big climax planned, like one guest-starring the rest of the **Marvel Family**, the **Squadron of Justice** and **Isis** against Earth's greatest villains and Sivana!

I hope you don't continue **Shazam, Inc.** when traveling from town to town. But I hope you continue having **Uncle Marvel** appear, though not every issue! I would really like to see the **Marvel Family** around soon! And as for the art . . . keep Kurt Schaffenberger and Vince Colletta forever. They are terrific!

One closing suggestion: let's see more of Beautia—and bring back Magnificus. Keep up the great work and —Holy Moley!—you'll have one of the world's greatest comics (if it isn't already)! So long!

Mark Reschke
1207 W. Parkway
Appleton, Wi. 54911

(Okay—Sivana's taking a rest for a few issues while *Mr. Mind* does his diabolical best (or worst) to destroy the *World's Mightiest Mortal*. As for your other suggestions—well, we'll hold them in reserve and decide later what to do. Meantime, we have a great Golden Age guest this issue—and *Mr. Tawny* playing for the Detroit Tigers next time.—E.N.B.)

Dear Mr. Bridwell:

Shazam is my favorite comic. When I see a **Shazam**, I buy it (unless I already have it). All other comics I have to look through before I buy them.

I was pleased with #29. The only thing was, I found a mistake on page 10, panel 2. **Ibac** said his name and didn't change back to Stanley Printwhistle. Why?

No matter what, **Shazam** will always be my favorite comic.

Mike Sussman
3580 Splinterwood Rd.
Norcross, Ga. 30092

Dear Nelson:

A couple of days ago, I picked up **Shazam** #29 at the store. The art was very good, but I don't think the "love scene" between **Minerva** and **Ibac** was the best thing you could come up with. Otherwise the issue was excellent. You should have the whole **Marvel Family** battle Sivana instead of just **Cap**. I have one question. Stanley is supposed to turn into **Ibac** when he says **"Ibac,"** right? Well, how come, when he said, "That must be what **Ibac** took out of the barrel he hid in," he didn't change?

Jimmy Bowlby
40 Baldwin Ave.
Pittsfield, Mass. 01201

(Oops! Twice in one issue! It can be as rough writing *Ibac* as *Captain Marvel Jr.*! Both change when they say their own names.—E.N.B.)

To all the Shazammers:

I thought of an interesting problem concerning the **Marvel Family**. According to a recent letter column, Billy Batson turns into his grown-up self when he becomes **Captain Marvel**. Let's say it's 25 years from now. Mary, Freddy and Billy are grown. If an adult Freddy Freeman spoke the name of his hero, wouldn't he become a boy again as **Captain Marvel Jr., World's Mightiest Boy?** It would be the same with Mary, wouldn't it? A grown-up Billy would be basically the same, except for his clothes and powers. What do you say to this problem, **Shazam** experts?

R. Lockhart
Fort Worth, Tex.

(Well, back in the '40's, there was a story called "Captain Marvel Jr. Meets Himself in the Future." His future self was an old man with white hair—and so was the future *Junior*! On the other hand, there was a story in which Billy went into the 30th century and met Bilbat, the Teletator (future lingo for Billy Batson, Television Commentator). The future Billy was still a boy (after 1,000 years) in this one—and changed into an adult *Capmarv*.—E. Nelson Bridwell)

DC Publishorial

SWAMP THING

FROM THE BEGINNING

The magic began six years ago in the *House of Secrets* #92. Editor Joe Orlando needed an eight-page story—fast. He called in one of his favorite writers, Len Wein, and a young artist whose work he equally admired, Berni Wrightson. Together they spawned a tale so memorably poignant that it exploded the mystery anthology format and gave birth to a single character series with a monster as the hero.

Of course the monster was *Swamp Thing*, once a scientist whose mangled body was dumped by his would-be killer into the black slime of a mire. When Dr. Alex Olsen* finally emerged from the nurturing swamp, the only remnants of his ravaged manhood were a mass of razor-edge feelings and anguished thoughts. Despite their urgency, they were muffled by Dr. Olsen's hideous new form. More plant than human, his body had become a lumbering monstrosity, fashioned from stagnant filth.

The concept of this sympathetic bog creature of course was Len's. But it was Berni who managed to bring off a visual characterization that could credibly repel the players in the story at the same time that it stirred a wrenching empathy in *Swamp Thing* readers. And, according to Len, it was Joe Orlando who gave the story its devastating final twist.

Berni remembers completing the pages over a weekend with the help of Mike Kaluta (who also modelled for the original villain) and Jeff Jones, who inked two of the pages. *House of Secrets #92* finally went to press. Within a week after it hit the stands, the mail poured in.

"*House of Secrets* outsold everything that month," says Len. "I got countless letters from people who said they read the story and cried."

Naturally, there was pressure to bring *Swamp Thing* back. Almost a year later, Len and Berni agreed to reconceive their monster for an ongoing book.

Once again, the creative team assembled, and this time they worked with the zeal and fecundity of visionaries with a long-term mission. All three of the men identified with the theme of the misunderstood monster. Len had always had an affinity for melancholy, melodrama, and tragic misfits. Berni, an avid fan of the E.C. Comics horror line, used to cry in Frankenstein movies. And Joe, too, was deeply influenced by E.C., especially by Otto Binder's *I, Robot* whose emotional paradoxes he himself had probed as an E.C. artist.

"Now that we had the chance," says Berni, "we decided to do something that was a tremendous amount of fun and incredibly commercial. We agreed that we'd take *Swamp Thing* to outlandish places all over the world and somehow include at least one classic monster figure in every book we did."

"Absolutely everything in the book was planned," says Len. "The *Swamp Thing's* thought balloons were always yellow. Because it was such an extraordinary effort for him to speak, on the rare occasions when he did, the balloons were orange. Whenever a caption referred to him, it was drippy, like the swamp."

The care lavished on both the larger concept and the smaller details was recognized not just by readers but by the comic industry. In 1972, it showered *Swamp Thing's* creators with Shazam Awards for the year's most outstanding contributions to the comic field.

Five years later, looking back on all his work in comics, Len says: "Pride-wise, nothing beats it for me. *Swamp Thing* stands out as a piece of art."

There is no fan who would not agree. Today, the first issue of *Swamp Thing* sells for $6.00, the second for $3.50 and the complete set of ten by Berni and Len is a true collector's treasure at around $27.00 if you could find it.

For those who can't afford such prices, it gives us pleasure to make the first two issues available in a 60 cent package. This time, there are absolutely no ads to interrupt the story's flow, and Berni has drawn a dramatic wrap-around cover solely for this occasion.

The book will be on sale this June under the title *The Original Swamp Thing Saga*. Look for it. Len is right. It's far more than good comic books. It is indeed a piece of art.

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It has been a couple of months since I've last mentioned our Dollar Comics. Well, since you're going to be haunting the newsstands for the *Swamp Thing* special you might as well keep your eyes open for our first Dollar Comic annual.

You see, the reports on our first Dollar Comics have been so resoundingly positive from readers and retailers, we've decided after seven months to do what we've been itching to—put out another Dollar Comic.

June launches issue #1 of DC's *Five Star Super-Hero Spectacular*. It's the first of a series of variously-priced annuals, and, as the title suggests, it will showcase five major superstars: The Batman, Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman, and The Atom, each in his own major story.

Five Star's artists and writers are among DC's finest: Cary Bates, Gerry Conway, Paul Kupperberg, Denny O'Neil, Marty Pasko, Jack Abel, Dick Dillin, Frank McLaughlin, Bob McLeod, Mike Nasser, Irv Novick, Joe Rubinstein, Joe Staton, and Steve Stiles. With Paul Levitz as editor, they've produced some of the most exciting and entertaining stories of the past 12 months. A Neal Adams cover tops off the book.

By the way, you might remember that in *Kobra* #7, several moons ago, we promised that the serpentine mastermind would take on The Batman. He does, not in the yet-to-be-published *Kobra* #8, but right here in *Five Star's* opening 17-page thriller.

Five Star Super-Hero Spectacular hits the stands around June 16th. You'll love it.

With all the best—

Jenette

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* The short story differed in a number of details from the revised origin story a year later. Dr. Alex Olsen, for instance, became Dr. Alec Holland.